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## **Diu and the Diuese: Indian Ocean, heritage, and cultural landscape**

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## Introduction

The island of Diu, off the coast of Gujarat in Western India, is peculiar. A laid-back and unassuming place in modern days, relatively hard to reach from anywhere but the Saurashtra peninsula above it (or Mumbai, from which there are now a few flights), most visitors will feel that it establishes a relationship of continuity with the surrounding state of Gujarat as much as it stands apart from it, and may be surprised to encounter a built heritage of a grandeur that seems at odds with its present quietness. While its Portuguese colonial past, which lasted from 1535 to December 1961, may be partly responsible for its specificity, the truth is that Diu was an especially dynamic place long before that. In fact, the historical centrality of Diu is largely unknown and rarely acknowledged, and the particular characteristics of the territory, of its inhabitants, and their culture are very much neglected.

As a contribution towards redressing this obscurity, the international congress *Diu and the Diuese: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* was held in Lisbon, in October 2016.<sup>1</sup> A selection of the papers presented on that occasion constitutes the contents of this special issue. The objectives of this congress were to locate Diu in broader geographies of research, going beyond its current peripherality to observe this territory not only as a player in former Portuguese colonial networks in Asia, but also in much wider networks of circulation. Granted, in such an endeavour, one must unavoidably approach Diu as a part of former Portuguese India and interpret its fortunes in connection with the strategies of empire in the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. But a highly relevant fact is that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the urgency of the Portuguese in controlling the island derived from the fact that it was already one of the leading ports of Western India, with a crucial role in the Western Indian Ocean routes that linked East Africa, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian subcontinent. For centuries, dynamic trade transformed Diu Town into a cosmopolitan settlement and brought in diverse communities, art forms, languages, cultures, and knowledge, the signs of which are still visible despite its decline as a bustling port city.

The congress, and therefore this special issue, were intended to be diverse. Participants encountered Diu and its people in different periods of time, met them in different geographies, read them in different sources, and interpreted them through the lenses of different academic disciplines. One of the key aspects of the conceptualisation of the congress is revealed in its title and repeated in that of this special issue: ‘Diu and

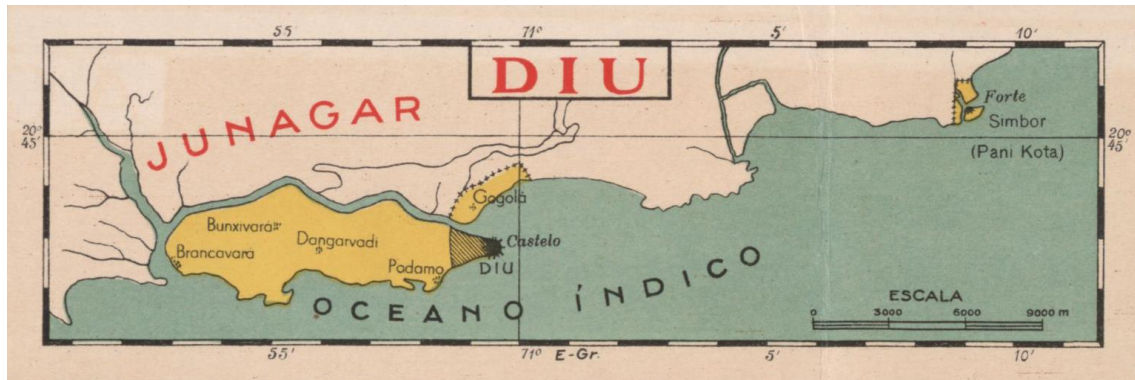
the Diuese'. Approaching Diu as a place plus its inhabitants, in the present as in the past, opens up interdisciplinary dialogues that are crucial to revisit and re-invent research fields. In the case of Diu, it enables us to engage with the stories that are kept alive in the memories of its inhabitants, to acknowledge the considerable impact of intense migratory fluxes to and from Diu, enmeshing colonial and postcolonial dichotomies, and to understand the transportation and transformation of cultural, religious, and linguistic practices.

As a result of the interdisciplinary gesture that underlay the congress, then, the contributions in this volume represent a variety of disciplines, chiefly Anthropology, Ethnomusicology, Linguistics, and Literature - though they exclude papers from the strict domain of History, which will feature in a separate publication. As we see it, the wealth of historical, artistic, and social complexities that they unveil stands as an illustration of the need to pay more attention to places, populations, and contexts seen as marginal or secondary. However, precisely because Diu has been in that position and, as such, may be relatively uncharted territory for many, we should start with a brief introduction of the place and its people, and of the extent to which the Humanities and Social Sciences have engaged with them.

### **Diu: the territory and the people**

The island of Diu lies just off the southern tip of Gujarat's region of Saurashtra and is connected to the mainland by two bridges. At about 13 kms in length and 4 kms in width, the island is relatively small and currently holds a population of just over 50,000.<sup>2</sup> Nearly half of the inhabitants cluster in the town of Diu, which occupies the eastern tip and stretches from the inner harbor (to the North) to the open sea (to the South). Elsewhere, a number of villages dot the island, the main ones being Vanakbara (a fishing and shipbuilding hub on the opposite end of the island), Bucharvada, and Fudam. Administratively, the present-day territory of Diu encompasses, in addition to the island, an adjoining strip of land on the mainland, on which sits the important village of Goghla, and the small exclave of Simbor [Simar] some 25 kms to the East. This patchy territory constitutes one of the two districts comprising the Union Territory of Daman and Diu, administered centrally and, therefore, not a part of the surrounding state of Gujarat. This special administrative status is a direct consequence of its past of Portuguese administration and the chronology of its integration in the Indian Union (in

1961, along with Goa and Daman). And so is its discontinuous nature, since the current territorial boundaries of the Diu District of the Union Territory of Daman & Diu correspond exactly to the extent of the previous Portuguese holdings in the region, represented in Map 1.



**Map 1.** 1934 map of the Portuguese colonial territories in and around Diu, including Diu island, Goghla, and Simbor<sup>3</sup>

Despite the existence of an airport on the island, served by very few flights, Diu currently lies outside any major transportation routes. These days, Diu is often seen as a place for relaxation, a convenient seaside escapade where alcohol is available (unlike in neighbouring Gujarat) amidst a peculiar heritage that blends elements of the surrounding lands with other, more ‘exotic’ ones.<sup>4</sup> However, even before the arrival of the Portuguese, Diu’s geographical position and convenient harbor at the mouth of the Bay of Cambay had already attracted different populations and activities – an important case being that of the Parsis, whom many believe to have established their first South Asian settlement in Diu, in AD 716, before moving across the Gulf to Sanjan.<sup>5</sup>

Diu’s colonial boundaries resulted in a certain drift from Saurashtra but did not isolate it entirely from the wider region. The Diuese population is a good example of this, since, in terms of language, religion, and most cultural characteristics, it constitutes a clear continuation of the human landscape of the wider area: the population is overwhelmingly Gujarati-speaking and Hindu, with a significant Muslim minority (just above 6%) and much smaller Christian, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist communities.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, there are certain specificities which reflect Diu’s particular history – several of which are explored in this issue –, in terms of built heritage (e.g., the abundance of churches and other Christian religious structures, the Portuguese-built fort, the Parsi Fire Temple and Towers of Silence, etc.), language (e.g., the presence of

Portuguese and of a Portuguese-lexified creole), migratory trends (e.g. to Portugal and Mozambique), and traditions (e.g. the repertoire of creole songs and certain Hindu devotional music), to name but a few.

### **Previous research in the Humanities and Social Sciences**

Whoever engages with Diu will see several hints of a highly cosmopolitan past appear through (and contrast with) its apparent quietness and remoteness. As a result, there is a considerable, though insufficient, legacy of research on Diu and its inhabitants from the perspective of the Humanities and Social Sciences, to which the present issue intends to add. Here, we give a brief account of the areas of research which have been developed over time with studies that had Diu as their principal (or a significantly central) object.

History is perhaps the aspect of Diu that has elicited the most attention. Research on the trade and population dynamics of the Indian Ocean have already established the centrality of Diu over time<sup>7</sup> and unearthed its privileged connections, among other Saurasthrian coastal port cities, with territories across the sea in East Africa and the Persian Gulf.<sup>8</sup> The aforementioned tradition that Diu was the first South Asian port of call of the incoming Zoroastrians has also received some attention,<sup>9</sup> but it is arguably the Portuguese colonial period that has attracted the most research. Particular attention has been given to 16<sup>th</sup> century episodes of military and diplomatic engagement, such as the 1509 naval Battle of Diu, in which the Portuguese defeated a combined fleet of South Asian and Middle Eastern antagonists, the events leading to the establishment of a Portuguese stronghold in 1535 (including the assassination of Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Gujarat), the two sieges of the Portuguese fortress laid by Gujarati-led forces in 1583 and in 1546, and subsequent Portuguese take-over of the entire island.<sup>10</sup>

The rich history of Diu and the diverse influences that crossed the territory have left behind an important tangible heritage which has also attracted the interest of scholars, be it that associated with the Gujarati tradition, with the presence of the Parsi community,<sup>11</sup> or with the Portuguese period (with emphasis on military and religious architecture, the decorative arts, and urbanism).<sup>12</sup>

The Diuese population<sup>13</sup> and its culture have also been studied to some extent, unearthing the convergence of peoples of diverse backgrounds. The Parsis and the role of Diu in the South Asian chapter of their history have already been mentioned. Another

community which has also been the object of research is that of the Siddis of African origin, whose presence in the region predates the Portuguese colonial period,<sup>14</sup> even if much still remains to investigate regarding their provenance and chronology in Diu, as well as their present-day reality. The Catholic population of Diu, though currently not very numerous, has also interested researchers, especially with respect to their linguistic repertoire (which includes Portuguese and Diu Portuguese Creole, in addition to Gujarati and, increasingly, English)<sup>15</sup> and their oral traditions.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, in recent times the considerable and very old Diuese diaspora has also been addressed by researchers, from a historical as well as a synchronic perspective, both as a central theme of research or integrating larger studies of the Indian diaspora across Portuguese colonial territories.<sup>17</sup> The relationship of these diasporic communities with the territory of Diu and with its traditions is especially rich, and this issue makes important contributions in this respect, with a particular emphasis on the significant Diuese community residing in the Lisbon area and the centuries-old connections with Mozambique.

### **New contributions**

The challenge given to the authors, for this special issue, was to approach Diu in its multiple dimensions, its architecture and visual culture and the relationship between built heritage and its oceanic location, its linguistic landscapes, narratives and national mythologies built around Portuguese rule, soundscapes and their social meanings in diasporic contexts, as well as memories of migration and of political and historical events. Even if some potential aspects of analysis concerning Diu and the Diuese could not be covered (which hints at the fact that there is still much scope for research there), the selected articles make important contributions in many of these domains.

The collection opens with Everton Machado's essay on the creation and dissemination of nationalist narratives, essentially revealing a symbolic appropriation of Diu by Portuguese national discourse. It reveals how the two 16<sup>th</sup>-century sieges of the Portuguese fortress of Diu, immediately branded as moments of significant military prowess and heroism, were represented by Portuguese authors from then on, and how these historical events passed into the realm of national mythology. An interesting observation is that, despite the fact that Diu is now a Hindu-majority territory, what played out in the sieges was essentially a struggle between Islam and Christianity,

which, as Machado points out, had a long history in the context of Portuguese overseas expansion. This imparts a decidedly transregional flavour to the interpretation of the literary and historiographical works inspired by the sieges of Diu, which add to various other strands of meaning constructed through their telling and retelling.

Hugo Cardoso's article concerns the Portuguese-lexified creole language that formed in Diu, especially among the Catholic population, and continues to be spoken to this day. This language, which is unique to Diu but establishes genealogical links with other Indo-Portuguese creoles (mainly that of Daman, but also the ones spoken in Korlai, Kerala, and Sri Lanka), has a history of linguistic documentation which began shortly before 1883, when the German philologist Hugo Schuchardt published the first ever study of Diu Creole. Based on archival evidence, Cardoso's article is a detailed account of how Schuchardt's study came to be, how data was sourced and treated, and what impact it had on the academic community of the time. One important fact is that this particular description of Diu Creole is among the first ever published on a creole language, making it central to the process that resulted in the establishment of a discipline of Creole Studies.

The following three articles focus on the vast field of the Diuese diaspora. Pedro Pombo explores traces left in Diu by its historic maritime connections across the Indian Ocean and its privileged contacts with Mozambique. This is done by intersecting a critical observation of the built heritage and visual culture of the old Diu town with an ethnographic study of the life stories of former emigrants in Mozambique (from the Vanza community of weavers). Pombo argues that, working across different layers of traces and memories of the maritime history of Diu, material and intangible, makes it possible to draw alternative cartographies of the Indian Ocean world that include the ways in which oceanic histories translate into a constellation of experiences and sensory worlds that characterise the region.

Moving beyond Mozambique, Inês Lourenço and Rita Cachado's article addresses the Diuese transnational population with links not only to that country, but also to Portugal and the United Kingdom. The text is a revisitation of both authors' ethnographic fieldwork, often carried out together, and therefore intends not only to present a reflexive posture on ethnographic fieldwork, but also to share the voices of their interlocutors. In the process, it gives an account of regular movements between Diu and these diasporic locations, with particular emphasis on the meanings attached to

Diu as the ancestral land, as well as on the ways Diu Hindus portray the late Portuguese colonialism in India and the impact of decolonisation.

Finally, Pedro Roxo explores a particular dimension of the cultural and religious life of diasporic Hindu-Gujarati communities (a category that subsumes the Diuese element) in Mozambique and Portugal, namely the practice of *kathiyawadi bhajans*. Different attitudes to performance and repertoire reveal several important dynamics structuring their social organisation, cooperation, and conflict. Given that, in these countries, the Hindu-Gujarati communities combine a significant Diuese element with a culturally-close one from the state of Gujarat, their respective adherence to different musical and performative styles can be related with their different cultural and religious profiles, and, in turn, with different identities played out in the structure of these diasporic communities.

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<sup>2</sup> The 2011 Census recorded a population of 52,074 residents in the territory of Diu. Data available at <<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-01.html>> [accessed 31 July 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Detail of a larger map including all Portuguese overseas territories: *Mapa de Portugal insular e império colonial português* (Porto: Livraria Escolar 'Progridior', 1934), preserved at Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal <<http://purl.pt/11436>> [accessed 4 February 2018]. Key to the current names of locations: *Brancavará* = Vanakbara; *Bunxivará* = Bucharvada; *Podamo* = Fudam; *Gogolá* = Goghla.

<sup>4</sup> Lately, the local authorities have been attempting to capitalise on these aspects of the economy by promoting tourist-oriented cultural events and branding Diu as the *Ilha de Calma* – a Portuguese phrase which translates as 'isle of calm'.

<sup>5</sup> With respect to this historical connection, as well as references to the Diuese Parsis in Portuguese sources, see: António do Carmo Azevedo, 'Diu: The Parsi connection', *Mare Liberum*, 9 (1995): 31-40.

<sup>6</sup> Out of the whole population, the 2011 Census classifies 48,613 people as Hindus, 3,190 as Muslims, 202 as Christians, 43 as Jains, only 3 as Sikhs, and 1 as Buddhist. Data available at <<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-01.html>> [accessed 31 July 2017].

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance: G.R. Tibbetts, *Arab navigation in the Indian ocean before the coming of the Portuguese* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1971); Lotika Varadarajan, 'Diu and its trade', *Studia* 49 (1989): 365-378; Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Pamila Gupta, Isabel Hofmeyr and Michael Pearson (eds.) *Eyes Across the Water - Navigating the Indian Ocean* (Cape Town: Unisa Press and Penguin India, 2010); Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade. South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> See: Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian merchants, 1750-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Edward Simpson, *Muslim Society and the Western Indian Ocean. The seafarers of Kachchh* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006); Sara Keller and Michael Pearson (eds.), *Port Towns of Gujarat* (New Delhi: Primus, 2014).



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<sup>9</sup> Mehrdad Shokoohy, 'The Zoroastrian Fire Temple in the Ex-Portuguese Colony of Diu, India', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13.1 (2003), 1-20.

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance: Jeronymo Quadros, *Diu, apontamentos para sua historia e chorographia* (Nova Goa: Tipographia Fontainhas, 1899); Adelino Delduque, *Diu: Breve notícia histórica e descritiva* (Lisbon: J. Rodrigues & Ca., 1928); A.B. de Bragança Pereira, *Os portugueses em Diu* (Bastorá: Tipografia Rangel, 1938) Separata *O Oriente Português*; Pedro Dias, *Diu em 1634. Documentos e notas para um retrato de uma praça portuguesa no Guzerate* (Lisbon: Academia de Marinha, 2002); Roger Lee de Jesus, *O Segundo Cerco de Diu*, MA dissertation (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 2012); Roger Lee de Jesus, 'As despesas da reconstrução da fortaleza de Diu em 1546-1547', *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura* 12 (2012): 217-243.

<sup>11</sup> Mehrdad Shokoohy, 'The Zoroastrian Fire Temple'; Mehrdad Shokoohy & Natalie H. Shokoohy, 'The island of Diu, its architecture and historic remains', *South Asian Studies* 26.2 (2010): 161-191.

<sup>12</sup> Nuno Grancho, 'Diu: uma tentativa de cidade', *Oriente* 6 (2003), 86-101; Nuno Grancho, 'Hibridismo na Índia: Diu, cidade guzerate e "cidade" católica' *Jornal dos Arquitectos* 220/221 (2005): 34-40; Nuno Grancho, *Diu, a social architectural and urban history*, doctoral dissertation on Heritage of Portuguese Influence, Architecture and Urbanism (Coimbra: University of Coimbra, 2016); Mónica E. Reis, *O Retábulo da Companhia de Jesus - Damão e Diu*, BA dissertation (Gambelas: Universidade do Algarve, 2007); Mónica E. Reis, 'O Retábulo Indo-Português de Damão e Diu', *Promontória* 5 (2007): 271-298.

<sup>13</sup> See: A.B. de Bragança Pereira, *Etnografia da Índia Portuguesa*, volume 2 (Bastorá: Tipografia Rangel, 1940); K. S. Singh, B. R. Solanki, N. K. Sinha and Jaime F. Pereira (eds.), *People of India: Daman and Diu*, volume XIX (Bombay: Popular Prakashan / Anthropological Survey of India, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance: Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi, 'African settlements in India', *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 1 (1992): 83-86; Ababu Yimene, 'Transplant and Ampersand Identity: The Siddis of Diu, India', *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 4.1 (2015), 19-33; Basu, Helene, 'History on the line. Music and the formation of Sidi identity in Western India', *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008).

<sup>15</sup> Hugo Schuchardt, 'Kreolische Studien III. Über das Indoportugiesische von Diu', *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien (Philosophisch-historische Klasse)* 103 (1883), 3-18; Hugo C. Cardoso, 'Diu Indo-Portuguese at present', *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 21.2 (2006), 399-410; Hugo C. Cardoso, *The Indo-Portuguese language of Diu* (Utrecht: Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Hugo C. Cardoso, 'Oral traditions of the Luso-Asian communities: local, regional and continental', in *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies, 1511-2011*, vol. 2, ed. by Laura Jarnagin (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 143-166

<sup>17</sup> Luís Frederico Antunes, *A Actividade da Companhia de Comércio: Baneanes de Diu em Moçambique, 1686-1777*, masters dissertation (Lisbon: FCSH-UNL, 1992); Luís Frederico Antunes, *O Bazar e a Fortaleza em Moçambique. A Comunidade Baneane do Guzerate e a Transformação do Comércio Afro-Asiático (1686-1810)*, doctoral dissertation (Lisbon: FCSH-UNL, 2001); Rita Ávila Cachado, *Colonialismo e Género na Índia - Diu. Contributos Para a Antropologia Pós-Colonial*, masters dissertation (Lisbon: ISCTE-IUL, 2003); Inês Lourenço, *Reflexões antropológicas em contexto pós-colonial. A comunidade hindu de Santo António dos Cavaleiros*, masters dissertation (Lisbon: ISCTE-IUL, 2003); Inês Lourenço, 'Diu: Espaço de reencontro', *Oriente* 12 (2005); Vladimir Zamparoni, 'Monhés, Baneanes, Chinas e Afro-maometanos' *Lusotopie* (2000), 191-222; Marta Vilar Rosales and Susana Trovão (eds.), *Das Índias, Gentes, Movimentos e pertenças transnacionais* (Lisboa: Colibri, 2010); Machado, *Ocean of Trade*.